



JK

## County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

713 KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012  
(213) 974-1101  
<http://ceo.lacounty.gov>

DAVID E. JANSSEN  
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors  
GLORIA MOLINA  
First District

YVONNE B. BURKE  
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY  
Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

July 12, 2007

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: David E. Janssen  
Chief Executive Officer

### HOUSING AUTHORITY INVESTIGATORS

On April 3, 2007, your Board instructed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to provide information regarding the process of adding investigator positions to the Housing Authority. In a subsequent meeting with Housing Authority managers, it was discovered that the Housing Authority had a sufficient number of investigators; however, the investigators lacked peace officer status.

The Housing Authority investigators are responsible to conduct investigations of criminal fraud and program violations committed by families participating in Section 8 and Public Housing programs. However, these investigators cannot obtain access to the necessary law enforcement databases, reports, nor execute search warrants to obtain financial information needed during the course of conducting criminal investigations. At this time, Housing Authority investigators lack the power to file criminal cases. In attempting to resolve this issue, my office looked into the process for obtaining peace officer status.

We discovered that before Los Angeles County can consider providing peace officer status to Housing Authority investigators, the California Peace Officer Standard and Training (POST) Commission must conduct a peace officer feasibility study to determine whether peace officer status or a change in peace officer status or designation is justified for the positions under consideration. The requesting agency is required to pay for the cost of the study. According to Charles Sandoval, Region IX Coordinator for POST, the costs for such a study varies from agency to agency based upon the complexity of the requesting organization. Mr. Sandoval estimates the actual costs of conducting the study can be between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Procedures regarding peace officer feasibility studies can be found in Commission Regulation 1019, *POST Administrative Manual*.

For your convenience, the procedures are summarized as follows:

1. The requesting agency must request in writing that the POST Commission undertake a feasibility study regarding the designation of persons or the entity as peace officers. The written request must include a statement that the persons or entity requesting the study agrees to pay the actual cost of conducting the study and must provide the POST Commission with the necessary information to conduct the study.
2. Upon filing such a request, the POST Commission will assign a consultant to work with the County.
3. An entrance interview will be scheduled to review the scope of the POST study and advise the entity of the documentation required for the POST study.
4. The time limits for completion and issuance of the study report and recommendations must be in accordance with Penal Code section 13542, which states that the POST study can take up to 18 months.
5. The payment of fees is due upon completion of the study, but prior to the "official release" of the study recommendations and results.

Aside from the length of time and cost for assessing peace officer status for Housing Authority investigators, current Board policy restricts the expansion of Labor Code 4850 (safety workers' compensation benefits) to additional personnel. Given the Board's policy restrictions, my office recommends that the Housing Authority proceed forward with the POST Commission study in order to determine whether peace officer designation is justified. Housing Authority investigators do not carry firearms and could be classified as limited peace officers without weapons and safety workers' compensation benefits similar to County Child Support and Welfare Fraud Investigators. My office along with the Housing Authority will return to your Board with the POST Commission study findings and recommendations.

As an interim option, my office recommends the assignment of a dedicated deputy sheriff (peace officer) to the Housing Authority investigation team to perform the various peace officer functions required while the POST Commission study proceeds. My office will work with both the Housing Authority and the Sheriff's Department to place this interim plan into effect.

Each Supervisor  
July 12, 2007  
Page 3

If you have any questions or need additional information, you may contact me or your staff may contact Rosemary Gutierrez at (213) 974-0564.

DEJ:SRH:BY  
GP:RMG:ap

c: Sheriff  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Executive Director, Los Angeles County Housing Authority

Housing Authority Investigators.bm